

How to Save Money on Your Local Telephone Bill

Competition is here for local telephone service in New York City. Just like with long distance service, consumers in New York City have a choice of local service providers. The question for local telephone service customers, however, isn't just which local company to use, but also which features and services to choose. Consumers need to know all of their local service options - which companies offer local service, what calling plans they have and which calling features and services are available.

TRAC urges consumers to carefully check their local telephone bills each month. Make sure the local carrier you select bills you only for the services and features that you ordered and want. It is also important to compare the prices of your carrier's service plans and features with competing local phone companies. The more you spend each month, the more you may be able to save.

This New York City chart is TRAC's first effort at providing consumers comparative information for local service, like it has for the past 20 years for long distance service. (See the back page for details on how to get information from TRAC on long distance rate comparisons.) The information in this chart is designed to help you compare the plans and features of the major local phone companies in New York City as of the publication of this chart (with the exception of Broadview Networks, whose prices are from May 1999).

HOW TO COMPARE LOCAL SERVICE PLANS

Determine Your Local Service Needs. Review your local telephone bills for the last three months. Note the number of calls, both local and local toll, that you typically make and their average length. Determine if there is a pattern to your calls, such as frequently calling on the same day of the week or at the same time of day. Decide which calling features, such as call-waiting, voicemail or *69 are important to you. Recognizing your calling patterns and the features you use will help you determine which category you fit into in TRAC's local service comparison chart.

Find Your Category on the Chart (see chart on page 2). TeleTips^{1M} New York City uses a calling basket approach to create sample monthly costs. There are two components to TRAC's local calling baskets. The first component is when, both time of day and day of week, the customer typically uses local telephone services. TRAC uses three categories or baskets of usage, "average daily," "heavy day" and "heavy night and weekend."

The second component of the calling basket is the amount of calls made and services used by the customer. TRAC created four types of local phone service users — "minimal," "light," "average" and "heavy." Each type of user is defined by the number of local calls, local toll calls, optional features and services and directory assistance calls made or used during one month.

To find your category, first locate your typical calling pattern. If you make the same number of calls during days, evenings and weekends then look at the average daily basket. If you make most calls during the day, look at the heavy day basket. If most of your calls are made at night and on the weekends, refer to the heavy night and weekend basket. Next, determine the "type" of user you are, by the average number of calls you make and services and features you use.

Compare Plans. Now that you have found which two categories you fit in, look for the least expensive calling plans. Read each plan's description to ensure that it includes all the features and services you desire.

EVALUATING FEATURES AND SERVICES

The information provided on pages 4 and 5 will help you compare the features and services offered by the various plans. Determining and prioritizing your local service needs will help you choose the plan that makes the most sense for you.



Local Residential Service

Plans	Average Daily ¹ Basket				Heavy Day ² Basket			Heavy Night & Weekend ³ Basket				
	Minimal User 4	Light User 5	Average User 6	Heavy User 7	Minimal User	Light User	Average User	Heavy User	Minimal User	Light User	Average User	Heavy User
AT&T **	\$24.20	\$36.18	\$45.71	\$51.15	\$24.20	\$36.18	\$45.71	\$51.15	\$24.20	\$36.18	\$45.71	\$51.15
Bell Atlantic (No Plan)	\$12.11	\$27.10	\$40.85	\$56.78	512.43	\$27.34	\$41.94	\$58.59	\$11.57	\$25.88	\$38.18	\$52.05
Bell Atlantic (¢ Per Min.)	\$11.62	\$24.75	\$37.42	\$52.25	\$11.94	\$25.17	\$38.50	\$54.31	\$11.16	\$23.75	\$35.06	\$48.25
Broadview Networks *	\$10.50	\$21.29	\$33.20	\$48.67	\$10.91	\$21.81	\$34.49	\$50.72	\$10.19	\$20.46	\$31.01	\$45.00
MCI **	\$11.39	\$28.09	\$39.58	\$50.38	\$13.62	\$29.87	\$42.46	\$54.86	\$11.16	\$27.49	\$36.28	\$45.38
MetTel	\$10.71	\$20.23	\$31.19	\$47.60	\$11.11	\$20.80	\$32.53	\$49.65	\$10.37	\$19.46	\$28.92	\$44.14
RCN	\$11.13	\$23.37	\$35.95	\$41.59	\$12.30	\$24.10	\$37.35	\$43.81	\$10.77	\$22.51	\$33,57	\$38.01

Assumes customer chooses bundled local, regional and long distance services; Broadview Network's rates as of May 1999.

HOW TO READ THIS CHART:

Before using this chart, please read page one of TeleTipsTM. It explains how to determine your personal calling pattern and which call basket best suits you. Please note that the numbers in this chart may only be compared with other numbers within the same column or call basket.

ABOUT THIS CHART:

The call baskets, Average Daily, Heavy Day and Heavy Night and Weekend, are each calculated to contain the same number of local and local toll calls, add-on features and per use services. The primary difference between the three calling groups is the proportion of total calls made during specific times of the day. For the purposes of this chart, all sample calls were calculated as follows: "Day" = Monday. 10am; "Evening" = Wednesday, 9pm; "Night and Weckend" - Wednesday, 11 pm and Saturday or Sunday, 10am - 9pm.

Each calling basket includes specific add-on and per-use services and monthly fees. In addition, the \$3.50 FCC surcharge is included while other taxes and surcharges are excluded.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Rates and terms of service change. The data in this chart was correct as of December 1, 1999. Always check with the local carrier to determine whether the rates or plans have changed.

^{**}At this time neither MCI nor AT&T effer voicemail. MCI aslo does not offer per use pricing of *66 and*69. Unlimited use of each service, *66 and *69, is available for \$2.85/ month.

Comparison Chart



FOOTNOTES:

- Average Daily Basket consists of approximately 25 percent day calls, 45 percent evering calls and 30 percent night and weekend calls.
- (2) Heavy Day Basket consists of approximately 50 percent day calls, 20 percent evening calls and 30 percent night and weekend calls.
- (3) Heavy Night and Weekend Basket consists of approximately 5 percent day calls, 25 percent evening calls and 70 percent night and weekend calls.
- (4) Minimal User 15 local calls, 2 local toll calls totaling 15 minutes and uses no add-on features.
- (5) Light User 30 local calls, 8 local toll calls totaling 65 minutes, has Caller ID and uses *69 once, *66 once and Directory Assistance (DA) twice.
- (6) Average User 90 local calls and 12 local toll calls totaling 95 minutes, has Caller ID and Call Waiting and uses *69 three times, *66 twice and DA four times.
- (7) Heavy User 150 local calls and 15 toll calls totaling 120 min utes, has Caller ID, Call Waiting, Voicemail and 3-way Calling and uses *69 six times, *66 four times and DA eight times.

DEFINITIONS:

LATA: An acronym for Local Access and Transport Area, LATAs are the 197 regional calling areas that were created when the Bell System was dismartled in 1984. LATAs are related to, but not directly based on, metropolitan areas.

Local Call: Local calls are all calls made within your local calling area that are non-toll calls.

Local Toll Call: A local toll call or regional call is a call that is beyond your immediate local service area but is still not considered long distance. These calls are usually intral ATA.

Long Distance Call: A long distance call is any telephone call to a destination outside your local service area. These calls are often referred to as interLATA calls.

PLAN DESCRIPTIONS AND ADD-ON PACKAGES USED IN CHART CALCULATIONS

AT&T

- √ Local-519.95, for 75 hrs of calls/month
- Local tell-\$.05/min. to areas surrounding NYC, \$.10min. to upstate NY.
- Value Package: \$12.50/month includes caller ID, call wtg. and 3-way calling.

Bell Atlantic (No Plan)

- ✓ Dial tone \$6.60
- ✓ Local calls \$.106 per call
- ✓ Local tell \$.137 for first min., \$.046/min. after that.

✓ Rate reductions on local and local toil calls.

40% 9pm-11pm, 65% 11pm-7am everyday, 8am-5pm Sat;
8am-11pm Sun.

Bell Atlantic Cents Per Minute Regional Plan

- ✓ Dial tone \$6.60
- √ Local calls \$.106
- √ Local toll \$.06 min, for first 60 min, & \$.05 min, after.
- √ Rate reductions on local calls: 40% 9pm-11pm;
 65% Hym-7am everyday, 8am-5pm Sat; 8am-11pm Sun
- √ Viluepack \$17.99 includes caller ID, call wtg, *66, *69, 3-way, etc.; \$10.99 for caller ID. *69 and *66.

Broadview Networks

- √ Dial tone \$5.75
- ✓ Local calls \$.095 per call
- ✓Local toll \$.123 for first min., \$.041/min. after that
- ✓ Rate reductions on local and local toll calls: 40% 9pm-11pm; 65% 11pm-7am everyday, 8am-5pm Sat; 8am-11pm Sun
- Valuepack \$16.99 includes caller ID, call wtg, *66, *69, 3-way, etc.; \$8.99 for caller ID, *69 and *66.

MCI WorldCom Local Savings

- ✓ Dial tone \$6.27
- ✓ Daytime calls (8am- 9pm) \$.10 per call.
- ✓ Evening calls (9pm-11pm) \$.06 per call
- √ Night/Weekend Calls (11pm 8am everyday and Sat. & Sun. 12 am-5pm) - \$.03.
- Local to'll calls \$.05/min. 7pm-7am & all weekend; .15/min.all other time
- ✓ Multi-Feature Discount: 3 features \$2.00 discount, 4+ features
 \$2.50 discount. Premium Package \$15.99.

MetTel

- √ Dial tone \$5.94
- ✓ Local calls 5.095 per call
- ✓ Local toil \$.1233 for first min., \$.0414 min. after that
- ✓ Rate reductions on local and local toil calls:
 40% 9pm-11pm weekdays and 5pm-11pm Sun;
 65% 11pm-8am weekdays and 8am Sat.-5pm Sun.
- Valuepack \$15.99 includes caller ID, call wtg, *66, *69, 3-way, etc.

RCN

- ✓ Dialtone-S6.27
- ✓ Local calls \$.10 per call
- ✓ Local toll-\$.057/min. for first 60 min., \$.047/min after that
- ✓ Rate reductions on local and local toil calls: 40% — 9pm-11pm weekdays 65% — 11pm-8am everyday & 11pm Fri. - 5pm Sun.
- Valuepack \$14.99 includes caller ID, call wtg, *66, *69, 3-way, etc.



Features and Services

	AT&T	Bell Atlantic	Broadview Networks		
Installation/ Service Initiation Fees	No fee to switch from Bell Atlantic.	New service connection: service charge \$16.00, Central Office line charge \$39.00 + additional dollars if premise visit.	No fee to switch from Bell Atlantic.		
Customer Service Number	1-800-ATT- 4ALL	In-state: 718-890-1550; Out of State: 718-890-1550	1-800-260-8766		
Local DA Charge	\$.45 per call.	\$.45 per call.	\$.45 per call.		
Long Distance DA Charge	\$.99 per call.	\$.95 per call.	\$.75 per call.		
Free DA for customers w/ Disabilities	Not currently available.	Available through BA Center for Customers with Disabilities; doctor certification required.	Provided for qualifying disabilities; doctor's certification required.		
TTY Customer Service	Not currently available.	1-800-974-6006	Not currently available.		
Discounts for TTY Users	Not currently available.	50% discount on all directly dialed calls when placed within the BA regional calling area.	Will match discount provided by Bell Atlantic.		
Pay by Credit Card	Yes, most credit cards accepted.	Not currently available.	Yes. Visa and MasterCard.		
Crediting Wrong Numbers	Contact customer service for credit.	Contact customer service for credit.	Contact customer service for credit.		
Canceling Service	Contact customer service.	Call the Residential Service Center.	Contact customer service, 90-day guarantee no switching fees, if not satisfied.		
Add-on Packages	Value Package-\$12.50/mo. includes caller ID, 3-way calling and call waiting.	ValuePack - \$17.99/mo. includes 8 features such as call waiting, caller ID, 3-way calling, call-forwarding, return call, etc.	\$16.99/mo.includes choice of any or all features from a list of eleven., i.e., call waiting, caller ID, 3-way calling, etc.		
Internet Access	Unlimited Access Plan - \$21.95/mo. Standard Price Plan - \$19.95/mo. (150 hours/mo., \$.99/additional hr) Hourly Price Plan \$9.95/mo. for 10 hrs., \$.99/additional hr.	Flat rate - \$19.95/mo. for 150 hrs., \$.99/additional hr. Hourly plan option = \$6.95/mo. For 5 hrs., \$.99/additional hr.	Broadview Online – \$24.95/mo. for basic service- \$12.95/mo. for customers of Broadview voice services		
NYC Service Area	5 boroughs of NYC	5 boroughs of NYC	5 boroughs of NYC		
Web site	www.att.com	www.bellatlantic.com	www.broadviewnet.com		

Comparison Chart &



	MCI	MetTel	RCN		
Installation/ Service Initiation Fees	\$140.25 - new service connection; no fee to switch from Bell Atlantic.	\$56.00 for brand new service; no fee to switch from Bell Atlantic.	No fee to switch to switch from Bell Atlantic.		
Customer Service Number	1-800-568-8030	1-877-METTEL-1; 1-888-YES- PHONE; or 212-588-0319	1-800-891-7770		
Local DA Charge	\$.45 per call.	\$.45 per call.	S.42 per call.		
Long Distance DA Charge	\$1.40 per call.	\$.90 per call.	S.71 per call.		
Free DA for customers w/ Disabilities	Yes; doctor's certification required.	Not currently available.	Not currently available,		
TTY Customer Service	1-800-374-4833	Not currently available.	Not currently available.		
Discounts for TTY Users	Yes. 50% off local calls; doctor's certification required.	Not currently available.	Not currently available.		
Pay by Credit Card	Yes. Visa and MasterCard.	Yes.	Yes. American Express, Visa, MasterCard and Discover		
Crediting Wrong Numbers	Contact customer service for credit.	Contact customer service for credit.	Contact customer service for credit		
Canceling Service	Contact customer service.	Call customer service and ask to have service canceled.	Call customer service and ask to have service canceled.		
Add-on Packages	\$15.99 package includes call waiting, caller ID, 3 -way calling, return call and call forwarding.	\$15.99 package includes caller ID w/ name or call waiting ID w/ name or call manager w/ name & re-dial, return call, 3-way, call waiting, etc.	\$14.99 Ultra Feature Package includes call waiting, caller ID, voicemail, 3-way calling and return call.		
Internet Access	\$16.95/mo. For 150 hrs., .99/additional hr. After 3 months, cost is \$19.95/ mo. unless you sign up for long distance service.	Free ISP through metconnect.com Customer Service number: 1-877-4-ISP-NYC	1-800-891-7779 \$19.95/mo. for unlimited service; first 3 months free.		
NYC Service Area	5 boroughs of NYC	5 boroughs of NYC	In select buildings in Manhattan		
Web site	www.mciworldcom.com	www.mettel.net	www.rencom		

TRAC is a nonprofit, tax-exempt, membership organization based in Washington, D.C. Its primary goal is to promote the interests of residential and small business telecommunications customers.

TRAC researches telecommunications issues and publishes TeleTips™ Residential and Small Business Long Distance Charts and Residential Local Service Charts to help consumers make informed decisions regarding their long distance and local service.

To order a single copy of either the TeleTipsTM Small Business Long Distance Chart, Residential Long Distance Chart, Residential Local Service Chart or TRAC's Using Telephone Directory Assistance Services brochure, please send a check or money order (\$7 per Business Chart; \$5 per Residential Long Distance Chart; \$2 per Residential Local Service Chart, \$1 per Directory Assistance Brochure) and a self-addressed, stamped, business-sized (#10) envelope with \$0.55 postage to:

TRAC P.O. Box 27279 Washington, D.C. 20005

Please specify which chart(s) you desire. Members automatically receive all of TRAC's publications.

TRAC is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of prominent leaders in the consumer, religious and civil rights movements. TRAC was formerly known as the National Citizens Committee on Broadcasting, founded in 1967. The name was changed in 1982 to reflect the changing role in consumer advocacy.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

YES! I want to join TRAC in order to keep my telephone service affordable.

As a member, you will receive the TeleTipsTM charts, published each year. This generally consists of two residential and two small business issues of TeleTipsTM, as well as any supplements published in between. You will be a well-informed consumer, and you won't have to worry about missing the hottest, new money-saving plans. The cost of joining is tax-deductible.

Membership Types	1 Year	2 Years
Individual	\$25	\$40
Business/Association	\$50	\$80
Student	\$10	S18
Sustaining	\$250	

Name:
Organization:
Address:
City: State: Zip:

Telephone:(____)____E-Mail:

Please send a check or money order, payable to TRAC and mail to:

